



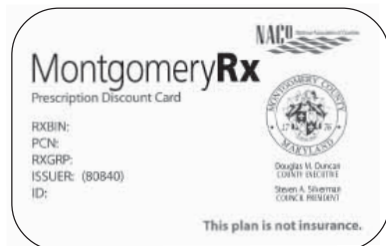
InTouch

July 2005

Volume Ten - Number Six

Prescription Discount Card Saving Residents \$1 Million

by Mary Anderson



County Executive Douglas M. Duncan recently released data showing that Montgomery County residents will save an estimated \$1million during the first year under Montgomery Rx, the discount prescription drug card made available to every resident in December 2004. Those using the card saved an average of 20% at participating pharmacies and drug stores.

Reports produced by the National Association of Counties (NACo) show that the discount prescription cards were used 26,128 times between December 2004 and March 2005, reducing total retail drug costs from \$1.77 million to \$1.42 million – for a savings of \$347,413 during this period.

The average prescription drug cost for a card holder was \$66, but the purchase price with discount averaged \$53, saving card holders an average of \$13 on each purchase. To date, total savings under the Rx drug card program are averaging \$90,000 per month.

Montgomery County distributed the prescription drug cards to residents in an effort to alleviate the burden of high cost prescription drugs for families without health insurance coverage. All commonly prescribed drugs are covered — both brand name and generic. There are no limits on how many times the card can be used and the discount offered can be as much as 50 percent off the retail price of the drug.

Montgomery Rx Discount Prescription Drug Cards are free and can be used by all County residents, regardless of age, income or existing health coverage. They are accepted in more than 120 pharmacies in the County and more than 54,000 nationwide. Cards are available at all County libraries and regional services centers or by calling (240) 777-1245. County residents can find a conveniently located participating drug store or pharmacy by calling (877) 321-2653.

"Portraits of Life": Honoring Holocaust Survivors

by Joe Shapiro and Shu-Ping Chan

During the month of October, a powerful and moving exhibit depicting Montgomery County residents who survived the Holocaust will be displayed in the Lobby Gallery of the Executive Office Building. A short biography accompanies these photographs, their black and white simplicity contrasting sharply with the complicated paths that have led these survivors, most now in their 70s and 80s, from one of history's most tragic periods to life in Montgomery County.

The exhibit is a reminder of the unspeakable brutality perpetrated against Jews during World War II and an attempt to bring communities closer together by sharing in the disbelief, horror and sadness of the period – and the inspiration and hope that the survivors bring to our community. The exhibit honors these victims, many of whom were innocent youths during the period who were singled out solely because of their religious background.

The enormous courage and strength of the survivors is nothing short of amazing, and shows the human spirit can overcome even the cruelest of evils. "This is a lesson that we all must remember and one that we must teach our children," said County Executive Douglas M. Duncan at the exhibit of the photographs at the annual Holocaust Memorial sponsored by the Paul Peck Humanities Institute at Montgomery College in May.

The 33 portraits will be on public display throughout October on the Lobby Level of the Executive Office Building, 101 Monroe Street in Rockville. For more information, call the Office of Community Outreach at (240) 777-2500.

Message from the County Executive



DOUGLAS M. DUNCAN

Dear Friends:

During the month of October, the Office of Community Outreach will sponsor an exhibit of portraits featuring current Montgomery County residents who survived one of history's most horrific periods. Photographs and short biographies of local Holocaust survivors will be on display in the Executive Office Building to help educate the community of the effects of unchecked intolerance, prejudice, hatred, and violence. I urge you to view this powerful and stirring exhibit and witness for yourself why we must "Never Forget."

The prescription discount card that the County began distributing in December 2004 is a big success! The National Association of Counties estimates that by next December, County residents using the card will be saving \$1 million in drug costs for the initial 12 month period that card is in use. Please see the article on page 1 for information about getting and using the card.

The Volunteer Center is developing a Medical Reserve Corps to enlist medical professionals who can volunteer and assist the County's public health officials during large scale emergencies. We are looking for volunteers with medical training to sign up and attend orientation meetings to discuss the County's needs and procedures to meet the challenges of a natural disaster, major accident or terrorist attack. Please call Ann Reiss at (240) 777-2618 for more information.

I wish you a safe and pleasant summer.

Sincerely,

Douglas M. Duncan
County Executive

Douglas M. Duncan, County Executive
Bruce Romer, Chief Administrative Officer
Parker Hamilton, Assistant CAO

Office of Community Outreach:

Debbie Resnick, Manager

Shu-Ping Chan, Asian Pacific American Liaison

Tina Clarke, African American/Black Liaison

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Submissions, comments and event announcements can be emailed to: InTouch@montgomerycountymd.gov. Those received by the first of March, June, September or December will be considered for the next issue of *In Touch*. Articles may be reproduced or translated into other languages with attribution.

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InTouch@montgomerycountymd.gov

Community Outreach at Silver Spring Regional Services Center

by Shu-Ping Chan

Rusty Wallace knows Montgomery County. A native of New York, Rusty moved to the Twinbrook area of Rockville in the 1950s as a child and is a graduate of Richard Montgomery High School. In 1971 he started work at the Takoma Park/East Silver Spring (TESS) Center and then moved over to the City of Rockville's Youth Services Bureau. At both jobs he established programs to track caseloads in youth and human services.

For the past seven years, Rusty has been Assistant Director of the Silver Spring Regional Services Center where he is responsible for developing community partnerships and initiatives which has led to the extraordinary success in program development and solving-problem mechanisms that are now in place to improve the quality of life in Silver Spring communities.

Silver Spring is home to one of the County's five Regional Services Centers which serve as the eyes and ears for the County Executive in their geographic locations. Their mission is to provide effective and timely liaison between the County and the regions' residents and businesses. By being right there in the neighborhoods, the Centers prove true the business adage that services are best delivered by those who are closest to the customer.

The concept of the Regional Services Centers as local, centralized facilities that provide information, assess regional issues and recommend or implement solutions is key to Montgomery County's philosophy of government being a partner with residents and businesses to build stronger communities.

Essential to developing these partnerships is the County's commitment to community outreach, whether in the County Executive's office, the Regional Services Centers or any of the service departments. This commitment is based on the simple belief that residents are in the best position to offer solutions to the issues they face. The County's role is to help prioritize needs and solutions, and to bring in resources that most effectively coordinate and implement the ideas of residents.

Rusty's commitment to community partnerships and outreach is evidenced by his leadership and participation in the long list of organizations that are working to improve Silver Spring. In addition to the official advisory board, Rusty may attend a meeting on any given evening with a group on pedestrian safety, education, transportation, community revitalization, public safety or urban district reorganization.

Major initiatives for the Center now are the two federal Weed and Seed Programs within the Long Branch and Northwest Park/Oakview neighborhoods.



RUSTY WALLACE

The goal is to develop strategies to "weed out" crime and plant the "seed" for community development, human services and other programs to improve quality of life. Both Northwest Park/Oakview and the Long Branch areas are currently designated by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) as Weed and Seed communities.

DOJ oversees the program for areas around the country where there is demonstrated community commitment to improving their neighborhoods. With a \$1.25 million

DOJ grant application pending, the Northwest Park/Oakview community is looking to make marked improvements and revitalizations in the coming years. The Weed and Seed funding for Long Branch has already been utilized, and the result has been a major reduction of crime and substance abuse in that area. Rusty is coordinating the Weed and Seed program in the Northwest Park/Oakview area, which began earlier this year.

Another outreach initiative for Rusty is the "Neighborhood Navigator". Basically a resource guide for residents to access County services, the document is indexed by several criteria in a logical, customer-friendly fashion so those using the book can identify a resource even if its exact name is not known. It is updated regularly and sent to the community via a series of email listserves maintained by the Silver Spring Regional Center. The listserves are also important in providing quick communications with the community on important issues and events.

As a 50 year resident of Montgomery County, Rusty certainly has seen significant demographic and social changes in all neighborhoods, particularly during the past 10 to 15 years. With a predominantly white population and a great deal of open space in the 1950s, Montgomery County is now urbanized in many areas and is the most diverse county in Maryland.

Rusty remembers the changes in the schools after the landmark 1954 Supreme Court desegregation decision *Brown v. Board of Education*. Growing up in a mostly white neighborhood, Rusty did not meet an individual from another racial background until junior high school. Of English and Scottish heritage, Rusty offered insight on how he successfully works with community members who are from backgrounds different than his. He sees all individuals as having something to offer and realizes that a diversity of viewpoints often brings innovative solutions to challenges.

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Diversity Council Reorganizes

by DeVance Walker, Jr.

The Diversity Council was created by County Executive Douglas M. Duncan to provide an environment that promotes and embraces diversity as a guiding principle and core business practice of Montgomery County. The Diversity Council serves as an advisory body and communication link between the County Executive and the Chief Administrative Officer to employees, employee associations, management and community groups that represent the diverse residents of the County.

The Council is a unique blend of employees of management and non-management personnel from diverse backgrounds. Every department and agency is represented on the Council. In addition, the Diversity Council also includes representatives from the County Council, Montgomery College, Montgomery County Public School System (MCPS), Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) and Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC).

Dr. DeVance Walker Jr. of the Department of Economic Development serves as the chairperson of the Council. Debbie Resnick of the County Executive's Office of Community Outreach and Angela Washington-Bivans of the Office of Human Resources were appointed ex-officio vice-chairs in accordance with the Council's Bylaws.

Currently, the Council has six operating committees: Agency Relations, Community Outreach, Communications, Equal Employment Opportunity Plan, Events, and Strategic Planning. These committees develop and carry out initiatives to fulfill the Council's mission, and in accordance with its strategic plan, to promote and increase awareness of diversity in the County and the community.

For more information about the Diversity Council, call DeVance Walker, Jr. at (240) 777-2032. For information on Montgomery County's Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity programs, contact Angela J. Washington-Bivans at 240-777-5015.

Public Health Emergency Planning

by Susan Klise

Montgomery County has developed a comprehensive Public Health Emergency Preparedness Plan that identifies and assigns roles to a large number of medically trained volunteers to supplement the County Public Health staff to prepare for possible large-scale public health emergencies.

The Plan calls for rapidly setting up multiple dispensing or immunizing sites for the public. In emergencies, medical and support volunteers would be needed to assist public health professionals to perform many tasks, including dispensing medications and immunizations, providing health education tailored to the event and working as part of an emergency response telephone hotline. Volunteers would also assist in a wide variety of medical or administrative support functions for clinics.

The Plan includes establishing the Medical Reserve Corps, which consists of local medical and health professionals who volunteer their expertise to assist their communities during public health emergencies. Practicing, retired or otherwise employed medical professionals such as doctors, nurses, pharmacists, veterinarians, emergency medical technicians and other medically trained professionals may register for the Corps.

The County holds quarterly orientation meetings for interested professionals. The County's Public Health Emergency Preparedness Plan (PHEPP) is presented and local officials discuss the crucial role health professionals can play in various public health emergency scenarios. Additional emergency preparedness training opportunities are provided to Medical Reserve Corps volunteers on an ongoing basis.

Every effort is made to ensure members of the Corps are representative of the County's population and outreach is done on a continual basis to recruit the diverse group of medical professionals required to meet the needs of all County residents should an emergency occur.

Those interested in lending their expertise should contact Ann Reiss, Director of the Medical Reserve Corps at (240) 777-2618 or by email at ann.reiss@montgomerycountymd.gov.

Community Outreach at Silver Spring Regional Services Center

from page 3

After college, Rusty took a backpacking trip to Europe which was an eye opening experience. Rusty saw up close how other people in other countries live. Being fluent in French and English, Rusty was able to converse with Europeans who grew up speaking several languages. Being exposed to and gaining an appreciation of other cultures provided the opportunity to appreciate one's own culture even more. Now working to improve the neighborhoods of Silver Spring,

Rusty wishes he had learned Spanish instead of French in college. Regardless, we are proud to have Rusty as part of our diverse workforce and community.

For more information on the Regional Services Centers, call: Silver Spring (301) 565-7300, Bethesda-Chevy Chase (240) 777-8200, Eastern County (240) 777-8400, Mid-County (240) 777-8100 or Upcounty (240) 777-8000.

Recent Events Sponsored by Office of Community Outreach



Understanding Diversity Through Art

Siham Eldadah, Irene Coleman and Lubna Ejaz (L-R) help County Executive Douglas M. Duncan and Deputy Superintendent of Schools Dr. Frieda Lacey present recognitions to 15 prize winners and over 80 participants in the Understanding Diversity Through Art program held on May 3, 2005. The artworks of the sixth graders were on display in the Executive Office Building for the entire month of May.



Photograph by LaVerne Flanagan-Norman

Juneteenth Celebration

Over 200 people participated in the County's Juneteenth Celebration held on June 16, 2005 at BlackRock Center for the Arts in Germantown. Juneteenth is recognized as the day of emancipation from slavery for the African American community. Pictured with County Executive Douglas M. Duncan are officers from the legendary Tuskegee Airmen from World War II who were honored at the celebration: (L-R) Wm. F. "Bill" Peterson, Alfred Bailey and James Pryde.

Photograph by Stuart Estler



Arab American Heritage Month

Juliet Francisco and Samira Hussein help County Executive Douglas M. Duncan celebrate Arab American Heritage Month, designated as April of each year. This year's event on April 30 at Bohrer Park in Gaithersburg attracted over 700 participants, including Gaithersburg Mayor Sidney A. Katz who helped welcome the large crowd.

Muslim Women in the Arts

A good audience turned out for the Muslim Women in the Arts exhibit on April 26, 2005 to highlight the artworks created by area Muslim women. The program included musical performances by the group Taqasim, an Arabic music ensemble.

Community Grants

by Shu-Ping Chan

Executive branch departments of Montgomery County offer and administer several types of grants for community organizations to accomplish the shared goal of building stronger communities. These grants are designed to promote the diverse needs of our County and to strengthen community relations.

Grants are available for organizations to purchase equipment to enhance service capacity, to meet community and economic development needs, to promote the arts and humanities or to delivery programs to strengthen specific communities within Montgomery County. Grants are usually awarded on an annual basis and some are one-time awards.

The Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) administers Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and Community Empowerment Grants (CEG). The Block Grants are available to any incorporated organization that has received nonprofit status recognized under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. CDBGs are used for neighborhood revitalization, economic development and facilities improvements to benefit low and moderate income individuals and families. The maximum amount of a CDBG is \$45,000.

DHCA's Community Empowerment Grants are one-time awards to promote direct services that enhance community identity, self sufficiency and civic participation. The maximum amount of a CEG is \$25,000.

For more information on grants administered by the Department of Housing and Community Affairs, call Luann Korona at (240) 777-3656. DHCA grant information is available on the County website by mid-July of each year with deadlines generally in mid-September for CDBGs and in November for CEGs.

The Department of Health and Human Services offers one-time Community Service Grants (CSG) to organizations with 501(c)(3) nonprofit status for capital purchases that support health and human activities that contribute to safe, healthy and self sufficient communities. The maximum amount of a CSG is \$20,000.

To be placed on the mailing list for information on grants through the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), call (240) 777-1285. A mailing is sent to organizations in September of each year when applications are available on the County website. HHS hosts a conference with community organizations to answer questions about the grant process. This conference is held generally in October, several weeks before the application deadline in early November of each year.

Finally, the Department of Recreation administers Cultural Facility Improvement Grants (CFIG) to broaden public access to arts and humanities activities. These

one-time awards go to organizations that provide direct services to residents that bring greater attention to the arts in Montgomery County. These grants are intended for purchasing equipment or making capital improvements. More information on grants through the Department of Recreation is available by calling (240) 777-6820. Applications are generally available in August. The Department of Recreation provides a grants workshop in September of each year for applicants and the CFIG deadline is early November.

Information on community grants through the County Council can be obtained by calling the Council offices at (240) 777-7900. For more information on all grants awarded by Montgomery County, including applications when available, visit the website www.montgomerycountymd.gov.

Predatory Lending and Other Scams

On May 18, Montgomery County's Office of Human Rights and the Interagency Fair Housing Coordinating Group sponsored an educational seminar on fair housing and predatory lending. Thirteen other agencies, nonprofit organizations and departments cosponsored. The event helped to educate residents about potential scams and unscrupulous practices of finance companies, lenders, contractors and others who tempt homeowners with refinancing, construction or home equity deals that on the surface seem enticing but in the end may cost homeowners their home equities or perhaps even the homes themselves.

Residents are urged to read the fine print in home improvement contracts, especially ones that require financing, to ensure the terms are understood and the contract amount is fair and suitable to the homeowner. Unscrupulous contractors may offer financing deals that forces homeowners to give up part of their equity in the home and then allows the contractor to repossess the home if there is a late payment.

Homeowners looking to refinance or take a home equity loan should understand all the terms so they do not enter into a contract where they pay excess interest, closing costs or transaction fees.



Other types of scams include deceptive credit card offers where consumers may pay hundreds of dollars for what they believe is a major credit card but receive nothing, or a card good for buying products only from a particular store or catalog. Other fraudulent companies claim to be foreclosure "saviors" and offer to allow more time for homeowners to stay in their houses before foreclosure by a bank by offering to buy out their outstanding mortgages. These companies pay the remaining mortgage amount, take ownership of the house but do not pay the homeowner for the appreciation in the home's value, thereby making money on the difference.

The fastest growing crime in the country is identity theft. All residents are urged to safeguard their social security numbers to prevent thieves from using these numbers to take over their financial identity and apply for credit cards or other loans. Residents should shred all unwanted documents containing sensitive information and place credit card and other payments in a U.S. Postal Service mailbox instead of leaving them in the box at home for pick up.

Because many fraudulent companies specifically target certain populations such as seniors, single adult families, widows and widowers, recent immigrants, individuals with disabilities and individuals with limited English proficiency, residents who are from or have family members from these communities are urged to be especially vigilant.

DVD copies of the May 18 seminar are available for loan at no charge to community groups for presentation to members. To borrow the DVD call the Office of Community Outreach at (240) 777-2500. For more educational materials on how to avoid financial scams and fraudulent financial practices, call the Consumer Affairs office at (240) 777-3636.

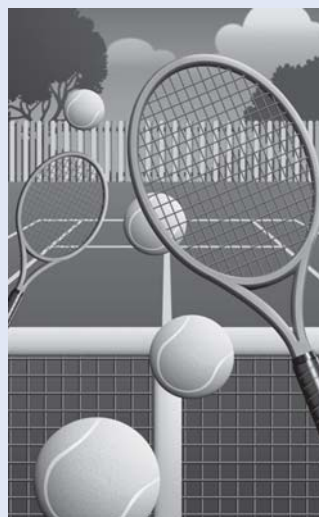
Training Open to Community

As part of the County's commitment to diversity and ensuring access to services for individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP), training is being offered to community members who have interest in these issues. This training is for incoming County employees, current frontline staff and their supervisors. Community members will participate in the same training as County staff. Sessions are conducted in conjunction with Montgomery College's Diversity Management Institute.

All sessions are held on the Johns Hopkins University campus in Rockville. Sessions are three hours long and begin at 9:00 AM and 1:00 PM. There will be three sessions in July and September, one in October, and two sessions in November and December. More classes are scheduled for 2006. There is no cost to attend but space is limited and registration is required. For more information or to register, send an email to karen.plucinski@montgomerycountymd.gov.

Summer Programs for Latino Youth

by Sue Tucker



A bilingual program for middle school students called "Tennis in the Parks," presented by former Davis Cup player Raul Semolina, will be offered this summer by Montgomery County's Department of Recreation. Two other summer camps will have onsite staff fluent in both English and Spanish.

The tennis program, which introduces concepts, terminology and skills is endorsed by the U.S. Tennis Association. Participants receive four weeks of biweekly instruction, a new tennis racket individually fitted to each participant and a U.S. Team tennis t-shirt.

Registration is available at Glenfield Park, 12800 Layhill Road in Wheaton. Sessions will be held Tuesdays and Thursdays, from August 1 to 25, 10 – 11:30 a.m., at Glenfield Park. The cost of the program is \$30 with reductions for qualified applicants.

The bilingual summer camps are being held at Shady Grove Middle School, 8100 Midcounty Highway, Gaithersburg and Wheaton-Claridge Local Park, 11901 Claridge Road. Both camps will provide bilingual staff, as well as newsletters and written information in both English and Spanish.

Summer camps consist of two-week sessions, running from June 20 through August 5.

Pre-registration is required. Registration and camp information is available in the Recreation Summer Program Guide available at community centers, County pools and libraries, and online at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rec.

Additionally, translation services are available for any resident interested in learning more about any of the programs and services offered by the Recreation Department. For more information on any of these programs, call 240-777-6870.

Office of Community Outreach
Offices of County Executive Douglas M. Duncan
101 Monroe Street
Rockville, Maryland 20850

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GilchristCenter for Cultural Diversity

Gilchrist Center for Cultural Diversity

Montgomery County's Charles W. Gilchrist Center for Cultural Diversity offers many free classes, events, seminars and programs. Topics include:

- Immigration and citizenship
- Small business development
- Tax assistance
- Free health screening
- How to use a computer and the internet
- How to find a job and write a resume
- Drug and alcohol prevention
- Free legal help on civil cases.

Please call (240) 777-4940 or visit the website www.montgomerycountymd.gov for more information and class schedules. The link to the Gilchrist Center is on the County's homepage.

The Gilchrist Center is located at 11319 Elkin Street in Wheaton, near University Boulevard, and can be reached by public transportation. The Germantown satellite office of the Gilchrist Center is located in the Upcounty Regional Services Center at 12900 Middlebrook Road, Germantown.